Natural Resources Conservation Service South Carolina's Current Developments Helping People Help the Land

USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service

August/September 2007

ONRCS South Carolina

From the office of the State Conservationist

Walter W. Douglas



In this issue....

SoFlorence Environmental **Discovery Center**pages 2-3 **⋙**Aiken County Small Farmers Making a Differencepages 4-5 SC's Lizard Man Promotes Clean Water in Scape Ore Watershedpage 6 SC NRCS Outreach Updatepage 7 SC Institute for Natural Resources Conservationpages 9-10 **⋙**Photo Contest Winnerspages 13-14



C.A.T. Is coming: Are you ready? See page 5.

Dear NRCSers,

As the fiscal year winds down, and we begin to plan for '08, I want to thank all of our employees, partners, and customers, for a great year of conservation success. Together, we've put thousand of acres of conservation practices on the ground, improved water quality throughout many of the state's watersheds, and helped producers, including small farmers, protect the natural resources that they depend upon for survival.

The new fiscal year also marks the implementation of the watershed-based management approach. This will be a new way of doing business, but I know that with the continued support of the Conservation Partnership, we can all work together to provide the best possible service to our customers. I believe that allocation of resources and management of personnel on a watershed basis will enhance the services that we offer, and allow us to better manage our time—whether we are out in the field, or in the field office.

Some of the things I'm looking forward to in the coming months include a ribbon cutting to celebrate the completion of the Holly Hill Flood Prevention Project in Orangeburg County, and a dedication ceremony in the Audubon Society's Francis Beidler Forest in Dorchester County to commemorate the signing of a 6,000-acre Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) easement. These are just a few of the conservation successes that illustrate why it's such a pleasure to be in Carolina.

Keep up the great work, and I look forward to seeing you soon!

Photo by Sabrenna Bryant, NRCS. Small farm of Robert and Hollie Gartman, Aiken, SC. See story on pages 4-5.

Walter Taylor

Notes from the Natural Resources Conservation Service ONRCS

Florence SWCD Enlightens Minds with Unique Environmental Discovery Center Sabrenna Bryant, SC NRCS Public Affairs Specialist

The Florence Soil and Water Conserva-

tion District (SWCD) has certainly been busy. Not just this year, but for the past *four* years. And now, they are seeing the results of all their hard work and effort as the new Environmental Discovery Center in the Lynches River County Park prepares for its grand opening.



(I. to r.) Retired architect Allen Wood, Florence SWCD Manager Sterling Sadler, and Lynches River County Park Superintendent Joe Ross worked together to make their vision a reality.

The project was the vision of Florence

SWCD Manager Sterling Sadler. Her idea was embraced by others in the community, and Florence County and the Florence SWCD joined forces to spearhead the project, while a committee of volunteers pitched in with ideas and manpower. To research and guide the development of the center, a committee of volunteer citizens was formed.

At the beginning, the biggest hurdle proved to be funding. After three years of searching, the committee raised \$1.15 million through federal, state, county and corporate grants, and private donations. This was enough money to build a state-of-the-art science education facility.

As committee members continued to seek financial support, they also desired to visit other premier science centers around the world to get ideas and inspiration. Sadler, along with committee members Allen Wood and Joe Ross, visited science facilities in Canada and Scotland. "While visiting other countries, I discovered that they were very progressive in educating the public about

science--not only through centers, but also through special events, such as festivals," said Sadler. "With this in mind, I want to make hands-on environmental education accessible to the citizens of Florence, and those who come visit us from all over the world, hopefully!"

Sadler, along with the committee, have done a great job planning this one-of-a-kind facility in South Carolina. While still under construction, the unique beauty and potential of the center is evident. With a backdrop of green lush trees and scenic views of the Lynches River, the building seems to have sprung up from the landscape. "Historically, buildings have been used to protect us from the elements, but this one is designed to showcase the beauty of nature and become one with its surroundings," said retired architect Allen Wood.

As a *LEED* (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certified project, the facility is considered a "green" building because construction materials consist of only used lumber from barns and other recyclable resources. Other green features include energy-efficient devices, such as tinted and glazed glass windows to block direct sunlight to help keep the center cool.

While the exterior design of the building

"I want to make hands-on environmental education accessible to the citizens of Florence, and those who come visit us from all over the world, hopefully!"

> -Sterling Sadler, Florence SWCD Manager

b I e n d s seamlessly with nature, the inside features a hightech collage of computers linked to conservation education sites

and plasma televisions projecting conservation education videos. The building will also offer wireless Internet.

Other highlights of the facility include a Nature Exchange Center where visitors are encouraged to bring in artifacts found on the park grounds, and keep a record of their collection through a special system. Once the visitor has logged a specific number of findings in their account, they are then allowed to take an artifact home. The Center also boasts a tabletop microscope from New Zealand, a solar recorder to measure the sunlight and weather instruments that can record lightning up to a 50-mile radius.

Also, historical conservation stories will be shared with the public from a small theater constructed of tobacco sticks-- another "green" feature.

Lynette Savereno, former Florence NRCS District Conservationist and now the Pee Dee Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) Coordinator, attended a two day brainstorming session during which the idea of building a treetop canopy was conceived. While the building in itself is phenomenal, the public will be in for an even greater treat once they step out the



The treetop canopy extends from the back of the center, with a height of 50 feet, offering visitors spectacular views of nature.

sources."

"This project has been an exciting journey involving a synergy of ideas from people of various backgrounds who continue to work together for a common goal," said Ross. While the science center is the biggest project of the partnership, they also have been busy with other projects in the park including walking trails, boardwalks over the swamps and floodplains, and construction of education stations featuring soil, water, air, animals and forestry.

back

This dedicated partnership of concerned conservationists and educators resulted in a valuable resource for the citizens of Florence County, as well as all the other individuals--young and old-- that



(I. to r.) Brothers Henry and Marion Swink were interviewed by professional Canadian videographer Lowell Cochran. The Swink's were selected for inclusion in a series of recorded oral histories which reflect the traditions, history, and culture of life along the Lynches River.

door onto this magnificent structure.

Resting fifty-feet above ground, the boardwalk offers visitors unparalleled views through the forest and out to the Lynches River. "The treetop canopy will afford us an exciting and rare glimpse of nature from such an elevated view," said Savereno. "I think this is a fantastic way to educate our children about the value of our natural remight be lucky enough to stumble upon this truly unique learning center.

The Environmental Discovery Center is due to be completed in October of 2007, and will be open to the public free of charge.

For more information, please contact Florence SWCD at 843-669-9686, ext. 115.

Conservation Programs Protect Soil, Water, and Wildlife

Landowners Encouraged to Apply by September 30th for Prioritized Funding

State Conservationist Walt Douglas recently announced that September 30, 2007, is the deadline to apply for assistance from NRCS for two of its Farm Bill programs in fiscal year 2008. NRCS provides financial and technical assistance to help South Carolina landowners address natural resource concerns, promote environmental quality, and protect wildlife habitat on property they own or control. The cost-share funds are available through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP), both administered by NRCS.

EQIP helps farmers improve production while protecting environmental quality by addressing such concerns as soil erosion and productivity, grazing management, water quality, animal waste, and forestry concerns. EQIP also assists eligible small-scale farmers who have historically not participated in or ranked high enough to be funded in previous program signups. WHIP assists landowners who want to improve wildlife habitat or restore natural ecosystems on their land.

There is a continuous signup for these programs; however, to increase your chances of funding, apply by September 30. Producers interested in applying should visit their local USDA Service Center as soon as possible to prepare their applications.

Visit www.sc.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/for more information, including eligibility information.

Aiken County Small Farmers Making a Difference--One Vegetable at a Time Sabrenna Bryant, NRCS Public Affairs Specialist

On a warm and hazy July morning in Aiken, SC, when most people would be relaxing and keeping cool indoors, this quaint small town is



Aiken County small scale farmer Hollie Gartman takes pride in presenting her customers with fresh vegetables.

bustling with activity. And there is no place busier than the local farmers' market. Located on the outskirts of town, the market is the meeting hotspot for many small farmers, including Hollie Gartman and Chris Johnson. These small farmers received financial and technical assistance through NRCS' **Environmental Quality** Incentives Program (EQIP), which offers help to qualifying small scale producers.

Gartman and her husband, Robert, have made a living farming for the past twenty years,

selling most of their produce at the local farmers' market. In September of 2006, they purchased ten acres of land that they had previously rented, and applied for EQIP assistance for small farmers. Once their application was approved, they received technical assistance from Aiken County NRCS District Conservationist

Emily Pohlman to help them install a 224-foot ground well, a drip irrigation system, and plastic wrap (which holds moisture, controls weed growth and helps crops grow faster). The well and drip irrigation system provide 50-gallons of water a minute.

Walking through the Gartman farm is like walking through a rainbow, with their colorful assortment of fresh vegetables. They grow mainly truck crops, including tomatoes, peas, corn, can-

taloupe, peanuts, potatoes, watermelon, pumpkins and nearly 15 varieties of squash. "Without the assistance of NRCS and the installation of the well, I'm certain we would not have yielded such a healthy and full crop this year," says Hollie.

While Robert continues to work full-time, Hollie is the primary caretaker of the farm, and she takes pride in producing the healthiest vegetables possible. She picks only ripe vegetables and holds them no longer than one day before taking them to the market to sell. Produce left over from the market that does not sell is usually given away or donated to local shelters, but never brought back to re-sell the next day. "I take pride in my reputation as a good small farmer. My customers know that when they buy from me, they are getting the freshest produce possible," she explains.

In addition to a commitment to provide a superior product to their loyal customers, the Gartmans are also dedicated stewards of the land. They plant field borders of corn and sunflowers around the perimeter of their property to protect nearby water sources from run-off and to provide food for wildlife.

"The Gartman family exemplifies all the qualities of good farmers," said Pohlman. "The pride they have for their farm is not only seen on their faces, but also in the enthusiasm, love and

dedication they share for farming".

Just adjacent to the Gartman's is another small farmer who takes pride in his operation and works tirelessly to provide high quality vegetables to his customers. Chris Johnson, also a truck farmer, received EQIP assistance in 2005 to install a drip irrigation sys-

tem using an existing well already on his property.

Born and raised on the 38-acre farm where he currently lives, Johnson said, "I have been farming all my life, first with my father, and now alone. Hopefully my son will pick up where I left off."

Although Johnson has a full-time job, he still manages to sell his produce at the local farmers' market with the help of relatives. He mainly sells peas and the Silver King variety of corn. Other crops on his farm include soybeans, and Johnson



-Aiken County Small Farmer Hollie Gartman plans to plant collards later in the season. He also has livestock, including hogs and chickens.

Johnson has been using the irrigation system for two years and has seen a significant improvement in growth. "Without the irrigation system, especially in April during the drought, I wouldn't have any corn," he said.

The irrigation system is situated on two acres of corn and divided into zones. Each zone is comprised of a water valve and a round



Chris Johnson's corn crop was very productive, due in part to his drip irrigation system. Many stalks grew as tall as eight feet.

barrel planted halfway in the ground, horizontally. The barrels are in place to prevent the valves from being hit or damaged. Johnson usually turns on the valves from 6:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., turning on different valves each day. Using this method, the crops usually get water every two or three days.

Johnson takes much pride in his corn and allows no one other than himself to harvest it. "Only I know when the corn is fully ripe and ready to be picked. No one, not even my son, is allowed to pluck the corn without my consent," explained Johnson. He also goes the extra mile by cutting the corn from the stalk, rather than pulling it. He feels that using this method makes the corn appear neater and makes it easier for the customer to peel.

Johnson plans to continue using the irrigation system, and hopes to plant additional crops besides corn. "Mr. Johnson really cares about the land, his crops and his customers," concluded Pohlman. "I feel confident that his farm will continue to thrive."

For more information, contact the Aiken County Conservation Partnership at (803) 649-4221.

Cultural Awareness Training (CAT)



August 23, 2007
West Columbia, SC
Brookland Community

Conference Center

Registration and continental breakfast begin at 8:00 a.m.

The program begins at 9:00 a.m. and concludes at 3:30 p.m.

Celebrating and
Acknowledging the
Value of Cultural Diversity"

Program highlights include--

™Tsunami Wave Riders

a unique tropical band that blends the sounds of rock, Hawaiian, Calypso, Reggae, and Beach music!

Mannonites: Our Story, Beliefs, and Practices D

A South Carolina native and Columbia International University graduate shares his personal story about what the Mennonites believe and practice.

Mark of Yoga and the Asian Indian Culture

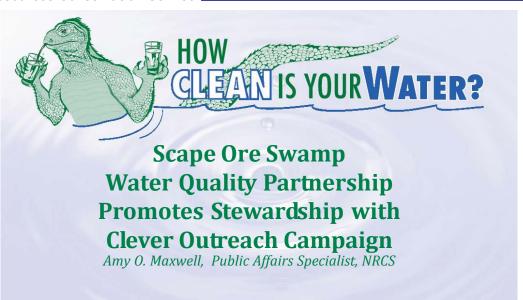
The Director of the Yoga and Wellness Center of Columbia shares her knowledge of alternative healing techniques and stress relief.

Solution Without Limits Solution

The founder of a unique program that encourages people with disabilities to pursue outdoor activities will share his touching story with our group.

Maint Pearlie Sue--a special surprise!
You don't want to miss this!

See ya there!



If you've lived in South Carolina for a while, then chances are you have heard the legend of the Lizard Man of Scape Ore Swamp (aka: The Lizard Man Of Lee County). This farfetched story about a half-man/half-lizard that roamed the Scape Ore Swamp even made it to national news back in the late 80's! Well, it appears that SC's Lizard Man is back on the prowl, but this time he is helping to improve and protect water quality!

The Santee Wateree Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) Council received a 319 Nonpoint Source Pollution (NPS) Grant from the SC Department of Health and Environmental Control. The grant funds are helping the Scape Ore Swamp Water Quality Partnership to identify and control excessive concentrations of fecal coliform bacteria. The discovery of high fecal coliform bacteria concentrations meant that the watershed was placed on South Carolina's list of Impaired Waters (303d). "This watershed is managed primarily as agricultural or forest lands, with the major crop being cotton," explained Santee Wateree RC&D Coordinator Roy Todd. Because animal waste contains fecal coliform, and because runoff from farming operations often ends up in nearby water sources, the potential for pollution is high in this watershed. Some of the problems identified included improper fertilizer management due to use of excessive poultry litter, and unrestricted access to streams and lakes by livestock. "We focused our efforts on educating landowners about best management practices, and offered them assistance in installing practices which protect water quality," explained Todd.

Some of the practices included fencing, repairing failed septic systems, constructing waste storage facilities, manure testing and composting, nutrient management, as well as stream protection including buffer strips.

Another interesting component of the project was the public outreach campaign. It was determined that failed septic systems on private home sites were another cause of degraded water quality in the watershed. A study indicated that over 90% of residents within the Scape Ore Watershed used septic tank systems, and over 5% of these were failing. "We had to educate homeowners about the effects that they too can have on water quality in this watershed," said Todd.

The unique outreach campaign was implemented by creating a campaign logo featuring the Lizard Man, and the question, "How Clean is Your Water?" Todd said this simple question makes people realize that the water quality in a watershed is important to everybody—not just farmers or landowners. "We are trying to get people to understand that the water they depend on for survival everyday is impacted by so many different sources, including what goes on right around their own homes."

This project is a partnership between the Santee-Wateree RC&D, Lee and Kershaw Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD's), the SC Department of Natural Resources, USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), SCDHEC, and the US Environmental Protection Agency. For more information, contact Todd at (843) 629-8784, ext. 5.

SC NRCS Outreach Update

Amy O. Maxwell, Public Affairs Specialist and Outreach Coordinator, NRCS

SC NRCS allocated outreach funds to help support the fourth annual South Carolina Commissioner's School for Agriculture (SCCSA). The summer academic program is an intense, pre-college school (for high school juniors and seniors) that gives students a glimpse into the academic and career possibilities related to agriculture and natural resources. This year, 32 students, including six from out of state, spent a week experiencing scientific exploration, academic integrity, teamwork, personal growth and leadership activities.

The program is a partnership among the office of S.C. Agriculture Commissioner Hugh E. Weathers, the S.C. Department of Agriculture, and the College of Agriculture, Forestry and Life Sciences at Clemson University. The school is supported additionally by Advocates for Agriculture, Clemson Agricultural Alumni Association, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, and a number of Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

SC NRCS Outreach Coordinator Amy O. Maxwell attended the closing ceremony in Pendleton where NRCS was thanked for supporting the school. SC NRCS has been involved with the program since it began in 2004.

→ SC NRCS allocated outreach funds to help United Farmers, USA, design and host a web site which promotes services available to small scale farmers, including Farm Bill program assistance available through EQIP. The web site was professionally designed, and contains information that is use-

ful to small scale and limited resource farmers. The site will go 'live' in the Fall of 2007.



and the cooperative agreement states that NRCS will include updated information on technical and financial assistance available to small scale farmers on the site.

SC NRCS allocated outreach funds to help sponsor a joint USDA Program Workshop for Small Scale and Limited Resource Farmers, specifically targeting SC's coastal landowners in Hampton, Allendale, Beaufort, Jasper,

Colleton, and Charleston Counties. The workshops will feature presenta-



tions by North Carolina A&T's Department Chair of Animal Science, Dr. Ralph Nobles, and SC NRCS Grassland and Forestry Specialist David Findley. Topics will include pastureland forage, silvopasture, and fencing for goats.

The workshops will be held at the Penn Center, and will be organized in cooperation with the Penn Center's Farm Manager. Penn Center staff will also illustrate to workshop participants how their farm acreage has benefited from participation in USDA programs, including EQIP and FRPP.

SC NRCS is also cooperating with the Penn Center to provide a 50% match to purchase and install a solar pump and portable fencing on a demonstration site specifically targeted for education of small and limited resource farmers.

→ SC NRCS allocated outreach funds to help support the 2007 SC Agronomy Career Development Event, sponsored by SC Future Farmers of America (FFA). The event took place in April at the State Fairgrounds, and featured a contest where FFA teams gathered to illustrate their skills in agronomic science, crop identification, and also tested their knowledge of sustainable agriculture and stewardship, including the use of best management practices. SC NRCS helped sponsor the 1st place prize, which will assist the winning team in traveling to the national competition.

Outreach is... a way of conducting business to ensure that underserved individuals and groups throughout the United States and its territories are made aware of, understand and have a working knowledge of USDA programs and services. Outreach will ensure that these programs and services are equitable and made accessible to *all*.

Secretary of Agriculture Announces Additional Conservation Security Program (CSP) Activities

Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns announced the release of additional funding for Conservation Security Program (CSP) implementation. "Through our actions today, the Conservation Security Program will fully realize the promise to recognize and award those producers that demonstrate conservation excellence," Johanns said. "These steps represent a way to bring the past program to completion, and set the stage for the future of CSP, beyond passage of the Farm Bill."

Funds will be made available for both the completion of payments on Fiscal year 2007 CSP contracts as well as to prepare for a future program sign up. Specifically, \$35 million has been made available to complete payments to producers who received only partial funding for their fiscal year 2007 payment.

In addition, \$2.93 million is being made available to help producers and NRCS field staff prepare for a future program sign up in the 51 watersheds previously identified for FY 2007, which represents lands in all 50 states, the Pacific Islands and the Caribbean.

The funding was made possible through a supplemental appropriations bill provided by Congress on May 25, 2007. A list of the eligible watersheds can be viewed at http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/. USDA offers CSP in new watersheds annually on a rotational basis in as many watersheds as funding allows. For more information about CSP, including a map of targeted watersheds and eligibility requirements, please visit http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/csp.

CSP is a voluntary program that supports ongoing conservation stewardship on private agricultural working lands and enhances the condition of the nation's natural resources.

The USDA Farm Bill proposal calls for substantial reform and improvement of the Conservation Security Program with a goal of conducting nationwide sign ups in the future.

Conservation District Meetings, Hunting-Fishing Regulations, and More Available Online at SCDNR

New rules and regulations for hunting and fishing and a Wildlife Management Areas map are now available online at the S.C. Department of Natural Resources Web site. You can also access new saltwater, freshwater maps, a new section on the state's fish hatcheries and find out more about S.C. Department of Natural Resources (DNR) events at the Calendar. It's part of the continuing effort by DNR to make it more convenient for recreational boaters, anglers, hunters, and nature enthusiasts to enjoy the state's natural resources.

You can get an early look at the new "Rules and Regulations for Hunting, Fishing in South Carolina" at the DNR Web site. The regulations are posted in PDF format, and you can scroll through the publication and click on the Web links embedded in the document. Print copies of the Rules and Regulations will be available free at license vendor locations by Aug. 10. The Rules and Regulations cover everything from information on invasive aquatic plants to shrimp-baiting permits.

It's now easier than ever to get information on Wildlife Management Areas (WMA) with new color-coded maps. The map page also has convenient links to hunting seasons, WMA hunting opportunities and lists of Game Zone counties among other useful information.

The dividing line between saltwater and freshwater on South Carolina rivers is listed in a new series of online maps from DNR. There you'll find an overview map of South Carolina's coastal dividing line as well as more detailed PDF file maps of specific areas.

When and where is the next S.C. Natural Resources Board meeting? How many days does the Palmetto Sportsmen's Classic run? You can now get details on activities around the state and get notices to your e-mail inbox with the DNR online Calendar. You can specialize the Calendar in a variety of ways from conservation districts to DNR meetings and search for specific events. Many of the files mentioned above are in the Adobe PDF file format.

Adobe Reader is required to open the files and is available as a <u>free download</u> from the Adobe Web site.

2007 South Carolina Institute for Natural Resources Conservation Treats Kids to the Wonders of the Saluda River

Brian Stoddard, USDA-NRCS District Conservationist, Greenwood, SC

What is it like to spend a day on the river? Run some rapids? Paddle a canoe as fish jump and Kingfisher birds swoop? Have lunch at a riverside park with friends?

High school-aged participants of the 2007 South Carolina Institute for Natural Resources Conservation were exposed to these wonders and more. On June 28th, they got up-close-and-personal with the rapids along the Saluda River as part of a field day and hamburger cookout co-sponsored by the Greenwood and Laurens Soil and Water Conserva-

Districts tion (SWCD's).

Institute participants, counselors, and guides started the day early, arriving at Pitts Park to unload over twenty canoes and kayaks. After donning their helmets and life vests, the group took off down river to run the rapids. A favorite of many paddlers was a sluice nicknamed Broke-nose by the group. This descriptive moniker came from the sharp bump

many boaters received as they negotiated around a very large boulder at the base of the rapid.

The swift water safely behind them, the group continued downstream below Ware Shoals (where the river is calmer). The group spotted plenty of fish and wildlife including fish lunging out of the water in search of insects, and abundant Kingfisher birds skimming close to the river surface looking for minnows. Turtles poked their heads above water to spy on the group, and the paddlers even heard the sounds of startled deer bounding away from the river and through the brush.

Downstream from US Highway 25, the group stopped for a swim at the old stone pillars that gave Burnt Bridge Road its name. The river is deep and slow at this point with many boulders just below the surface that make good jumping platforms. After a cool dip, the group paddled down river to their designated take-out spot.

Greenwood SWCD Chairman Greg Henderson said, "We are so glad for the opportunity to bring these young people to Ware Shoals and spend time on the Saluda River. It is a wonderful resource not only for the town, but for the entire region. Our duty and privilege is to sponsor

> events like the Institute that highlight the river and illustrate to participants why its in their best interest to take care of it, as well as all the natural resources that we enjoy."

The Greenwood and Laurens SWCD's have also been involved in an effort to obtain grant funds to improve river access. Though not vet approved, the Greenwood SWCD has already promised several hundred dollars of its own budget to con-

struct two kiosks to be placed at river access points. The kiosks will provide a central location for posting of important information.

These efforts for improved access by the SWCD's actually stem from river trips taken in past years by the Institute. "We wanted to give the kids a memorable outdoor experience as a reward for having worked and studied so hard earlier in the week," said Neil Bartley, SCDNR Program Coordinator. Bartley has served as the Director of the Institute for the past several years, and has been associated with it since the late 1970s. "Years ago, the Institute was held at Clemson University and included a trip on the Chattooga River. When



Participants of the 2007 SC Institute for Natural Resources Conservation enjoyed a day paddling the Saluda River.

we moved the Institute to Lander University, we lost that option. Three years ago, we decided to try a trip on the Saluda River, and it was far more successful than we could have hoped. I really feel that the river trip has gotten better each year and is a highlight of the week."

Brian Stoddard, USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) District Conservationist in Greenwood County, assisted Bartley as they began searching for a river that would be appropriate for the Institute participants. During their research, they were thrilled to discover the beauty of the forested, rocky bluffs that line the river between Ware Shoals and US-25. "It was like getting an unexpected surprise," explained Stoddard. "Essentially, we

surprise," explained Stoddard. stumbled upon a miniature ecosystem similar to what you would find in the mountains, complete with large rock formations and mountain laurel."

Ware Shoals Mayor George Rush was instrumental in securing permission for Bartley and Stoddard to perform a natural resources inventory of the river. With the inventory complete, they are now waiting to hear about the results of the grant application. If they are successful, it could be the first step towards even greater improvements.

"People care about and want access to beautiful natural places," says Henderson. "To have a resource of this caliber here in Ware Shoals is a tremendous opportunity for the community. We hope that promoting events such as today's river trip will help foster the wise development of the Saluda River to its fullest potential." Bartley agrees. "These kids come to the Institute from all over South Carolina and will carry the memories of their trip on the Saluda River back with them. It would be great if the same experiences were readily available to a wide range of citizens."

And, always thinking ahead, Bartley is already planning next year's outing. "We will definitely be back on the Saluda River. We may change a couple of minor things, but the trip went really smoothly." Bartley would like for more students to participate. "We have the capability of accommodating more kids at the Institute than we had this year. I would love for us to get to the point where we had a waiting list!"

With an attraction like the Saluda River trip on the schedule, Bartley will likely get his wish.

The SC Institute for Natural Resources Conservation is a cooperative venture of the SCDNR, the South Carolina Conservation Districts Foundation, the 46 Conservation Districts of South Carolina, and Lander University. All SC high school juniors and seniors are eligible to participate, and must be sponsored by their local Soil and Water Conservation District. The Institute is structured such that teams of students are assigned a counselor who works with them the entire week. Instructors are all working professionals in natural resource areas or members of Lander University's Department of Biology and Depart-

ment of Physical Sciences. Areas of study include wildlife, wildlife management, soils and geology, current natural resource technology, water quality, forestry, and aquatics. All participants completing the weeklong course receive college credit. In addition, scholarship prizes are awarded to the participants who score the highest on the comprehensive exam the closing day. This year the participant with the top score was awarded a four-year scholarship in Environmental Sci-

"It was a wonderful surprise," explained Stoddard. "Essentially, we stumbled upon a miniature ecosystem similar to what you would find in the mountains, complete with large rock formations and mountain laurel."

-Brian Stoddard, NRCS District Conservationist, describing the search to find an appropriate river for the paddle trip

ence from Lander University.

For more information, contact your local Soil and Water Conservation District, or call the Greenwood SWCD at 229-3004, 101.



Roachell Martin is a man who loves

the heart is, and Martin made that clear when he moved back to his birthplace of Woodrow, SC, in Lee County. Martin and his wife enjoy the peace and tranquility offered by the 10-acre small farm that they manage. "I was born right here, and this is where I wanted to come back to," says Martin, his face lit with enthusiasm. This Danny Glover look-alike (he admits people have stopped him on the street to ask for autographs because of the resemblance he bears to the actor) doesn't wish for a Hollywood lifestyle, because he loves taking care of the land and tending to his animals.

Martin previously farmed 150+ acres in Sumter County with this brother, but made the decision to come back to Woodrow. He received financial and technical assistance through NRCS' Environmental Quality Incentives Program under special assistance available to small-scale farmers, and from the Lee County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD). Working together, the Lee County Conservation Partnership assisted Martin in installing a well, which made it easier for him to care for his livestock. Prior to getting the well, Martin's livestock had to seek water out of a nearby stream. This threatened water quality,

and made it difficult for Martin to ensure that his animals were getting the care that they needed. Furthermore, in order to compensate for lack of water, the Martin's often sacrificed their own comfort by limiting the water use in their house. "There were times when we didn't have water for ourselves, because we had to give it to our animals," said Martin. "This was a situation where a family was giving up their quality of life in order to care for their livestock," explained NRCS District Conservationist Lori Bataller.

Another important part of the equation

was the effort of NRCS Soil Conservation Technician Larry Garner. He served as a technical liaison between the well driller and Martin, ensuring that the work being done was accurate and timely. "Larry was so helpful in mak-

"There were times when we didn't have water for ourselves, because we had to give it to our animals."

> -Small farmer Roachell Martin

ing sure that the Martin's got what they needed, when they needed it," explained Bataller. In addi-

tion, the Lee SWCD offered to front the cost for the well installation, which helped the Martin's get the assistance that they needed immediately. Under the small-scale farmer assistance through EQIP, Martin is required to keep farm records which help him keep track of expenditures and nutrient application. His conservation plan also calls for installation of water troughs and reinforced areas, as well as implementation of rotational grazing.

Now that the well is functioning, Martin is excited about the ease of caring for his hogs, cows, goats, and chickens. In addition, he likes the idea of the recordkeeping. "It really helps me keep track of what I'm doing, and what I need to do in the future," he explained.

The dedication of the Lee Conservation Partnership, and the conservation ethic of Martin, blended perfectly and resulted in a great conservation success story. Working together, these conservation stewards enabled a small farmer to improve his quality of life, and protect soil and water quality.

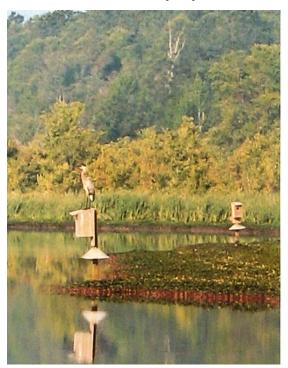


(I. to r.) NRCS Soil Conservation Technician Larry Garner worked with small farmer Roachell Martin to install a well on his 10-acre farm.

Conservation Photo Contest Winners



Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) site in Bamberg County, by Merle Diem, Soil Conservation Technician



Lake Warren State Park, in Hampton County, by Paula Rhodes, Education Coordinator, Hampton SWCD.



Gator on the prowl, Sumter County, by Ron Morton, Resource Soil Scientist

Photo Contest Winners continued...



"Sittin' on the Dock of the Bay," by Ann Bentley, Soil Conservation Technician, Charleston County.



Lakeside, by Sue Griggs, Soil Conservation Technician, Chesterfield County.

South Carolina

helping People Help the Land	SDAN

FIRST CLASS

USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service 1835 Assembly Street, Room 950 Columbia, South Carolina 29201

Visit us on the web at www.sc.nrcs.usda.gov

NRCS Public Affairs Team

Editor: Amy O. Maxwell, State Public Affairs Specialist

Assistant Editor: Sabrenna Bennett, Public

Affairs Assistant

Administrative Assistance: Mae Hazel

Please send comments and suggestions to:

USDA-NRCS EDITOR-Current Developments 1835 Assembly Street, Room 950 Columbia, SC 29201

Current Developments is published quarterly.

Non-Discrimination Statement

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or a part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.